

Safety Bulletin



Tornado Safety SB04-003



When a tornado is spotted, the time for life or death decisions is immediate. Lightning, heavy rain and/or hail frequently accompany or follow tornadoes. If the rain is extremely heavy or if the funnel forms at night, warning signs are reduced to a roaring noise, similar to a train or aircraft. Tornadoes can strike during any season and in any place. Most occur during the mid-afternoon and early evenings from April to October. Tornadoes strike viciously with an extreme force, high winds and very low pressure. They often touch the ground for less than 20 minutes; however, they may touch down several times in different areas.

TORNADO WEATHER WARNINGS

Tornado Watch:

- ☛ A tornado watch indicates that weather conditions may cause tornadoes to develop in an area. A watch does not mean that a tornado has been sighted. The watch may cover time periods of up to eight hours. People within a 200 or 300-mile area should be prepared for possible tornadoes. Residents of the designated area need not seek shelter or disrupt their normal routine during the tornado watch, but they should tune in to radio or TV and be alert for threatening weather conditions.

Tornado Warning:

- ☛ Local weather bureau offices issue tornado warnings when a tornado funnel has actually been sighted or indicated by radar. The warning may cover short periods of time (5 to 30 minutes) and specific areas (10 to 200 square miles). The warning will indicate where the tornado was detected and the area through which it is expected to move. You should seek immediate shelter if you are in the expected path of the storm.

BE PREPARED

Choose emergency areas that will provide shelter for every place you may be located during a tornado and conduct practice drills. Hold tornado drills at home, school, and the office.

- ☛ Seek the lowest level of the building such as a basement.
- ☛ If a basement is not available, choose an inner hallway or inner room away from the windows. Put as many walls between you and the outside as possible.
- ☛ Get under something sturdy (i.e. workbench, heavy table or desk).
- ☛ Avoid structures with wide, free-span roofs (e.g. auditorium, cafeteria, or hanger).
- ☛ Evacuate mobile homes.
- ☛ Have emergency equipment and supplies:
 - ✓ Lantern or powerful flashlight w/batteries.
 - ✓ Radio w/batteries.
 - ✓ Water and food.
 - ✓ Blankets.

Useful tools such as a crowbar, pick, shovel, or hammer could come in handy in case you need to clear an escape route through debris.

Fort Hood/Carson emergency warning systems consists of sirens, the TV pre-empt system. A siren during severe weather means a tornado is approaching our area, take cover and turn on your TV for information from the Fort Hood/Carson Operations Center. Monitor the radio or TV for further instructions.

- 🌿 Tune your television to the Fort Hood/Carson local cable channel.
- 🌿 Tune your radio to one of the local stations

SCHOOLS

Schools need to establish tornado drills to make students aware of safe areas and procedures. Teach the protective position: Get down, crouch on elbows and knees, face the inside wall, and place hands over the back of the head and neck. Bus drivers need instructions concerning passenger evacuation. Bus drivers should also be aware of safe areas along their route. The schools on Fort Hood/Carson do practice tornado drills, as required by the State.

STORES OR OFFICE

Get inside if the storm catches you between locations. Stay away from windows and doors. Seek shelter in interior hallways on the bottom floor. Stay on the side of the building opposite the oncoming tornado (generally the North-East side).

OUTSIDE

If you are in your vehicle never try to outrun the tornado. Tornadoes can pick up a car and hurl it through the air. Get out of the car and go inside a house or building. If a safe area is not available, lie in a ditch or culvert, or crouch near a strong building. Stay away from open water, trees, and anything metal such as: farm equipment, bicycles, wire fences, clotheslines, pipes, and rails. Metallic paths can carry lightning to you.

HOME

The safest place during a tornado is in an underground shelter. If you don't have an underground shelter, use the southwest corner of your basement. If you do not have a basement go to the center of the house or a small central room or closet. Since tornadoes usually last such a short time, a tornado shelter need not be stocked with food and water. You may wish to keep a first aid kit, lantern, shovel, pick, and crowbar in the shelter area.

TORNADO SURVIVAL RULES

- 🌿 Know the different weather conditions that may cause tornadoes to develop in an area. A tornado watch does not mean tornado warning.

- ☘ Protect yourself against the 'sandblasting' effect of flying glass and bits of sharp metal. Cover yourself with an old rug and crouch under heavy pieces of furniture. Use your arms to protect your head and neck.
- ☘ Listen to instructions on the radio. Do not call the installation weather station or Operations Center.
- ☘ If time permits, open windows on the northeast side of the house (or on the side away from the tornado's approach). This could prevent an explosion inside the house from the sudden drop in pressure outside.
- ☘ Stay away from windows. Do not run out into the street or into the path of the tornado.
- ☘ Do not use "hard wire" phones.
- ☘ Never try to out run a tornado in your vehicle or on foot. Travel at a 45-degree angle away from the storm.
- ☘ Be aware of possible dangers:
 - ✓ Flying objects
 - ✓ Falling trees
 - ✓ Broken windows
 - ✓ Collapsing buildings
 - ✓ Downed power lines
- ☘ Be prepared and know what to do if you find yourself in a tornado.